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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000611

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/17/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [BM](#) [NLD](#)

SUBJECT: RAZALI'S "MAN IN RANGOON" ON NATIONAL CONVENTION
STATE OF PLAY

REF: A. RANGOON 600

[B](#). 03 RANGOON 1431

[C](#). RANGOON 601

[D](#). RANGOON 544

Classified By: COM CARMEN MARTINEZ FOR REASONS 1.5 (B/D).

[1](#). (C) Summary: Leon de Reidmatten (LDR), UN Special Envoy Razali's "man in Rangoon" told COM that up until May 12, NLD leaders believed that an agreement had been reached to allow the party to participate in the National Convention. Despite the NLD's May 14 announcement that they would not participate, LDR believes there is still a very faint possibility of a compromise. LDR said that Prime Minister Khin Nyunt is now "very weak" and unable to deliver on his long-standing promises of a meeting between ASSK and the "Big Three" of the SPDC. He said the current impasse demonstrates that Senior General Than Shwe has a firm grip on power and little or no intention to enter into a real dialog with the opposition. On the subject of SE Razali, LDR believes Razali still wants to travel to Rangoon soon and knows that the SE will need to come prepared to overcome the NLD's perception that he is asking more from it than from the SPDC in the way of compromise. End Summary.

[2](#). (C) COM met with UN Special Envoy Razali's "man in Rangoon," Leon de Reidmatten, on the morning of Monday, April [17](#). De Reidmatten, a close confidante of Aung San Suu Kyi, said he was surprised on Friday, May 14, when the National League for Democracy announced (Ref A) it would not participate in the National Convention (NC). According to LDR, up until Wednesday, May 12, ASSK and the other NLD leaders believed, based on their talks with SPDC interlocutors (the Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Labor), that the following agreement had been reached which would have allowed the party to participate in the NC: the two remaining senior NLD party leaders, ASSK and U Tin Oo, would be released from house arrest before the opening of the NC; the NLD offices could reopen; and the NLD would be allowed to select 54 delegates to the NC.

[3](#). (C) However, LDR said he had not known before the May 14 press conference that the compromise fell apart on Thursday night, May 13, when the SPDC interlocutors advised the NLD that Senior General Than Shwe refused to approve it. The regime's best offer would be for ASSK and U Tin Oo to remain under house arrest and NLD branch party offices would remain closed, but the opportunity for the NLD to name delegates to the NC apparently remains on the table. LDR said that the SPDC representatives tried to assuage ASSK by praising her past cooperative attitude (saying she was "so dutiful") and then tried to get her to instruct the NLD to participate under these obviously unacceptable conditions.

[4](#). (C) According to LDR, ASSK could not accept the terms offered the night of May 13, and the NLD announced its non-participation on the morning of May 14. Shortly afterwards, LDR was approached by regime representatives and asked to try and get the NLD to compromise and participate in the NC. LDR said he told the regime representatives he would not make an approach to the NLD unless he could propose the following: the regime would set a date, preferably within a few weeks, for the release of ASSK and U Tin Oo; the regime would provide a firm timeline for the reopening of NLD branch offices; and the NLD would be allowed to freely name 54 delegates to the NC. Only under these conditions would he propose to the NLD the idea of participating in the NC while ASSK and U Tin Oo remain under house arrest and the NLD offices remain closed. The regime envoys agreed and then he discussed the terms with NLD spokesman U Lwin on Saturday. By that same evening U Lwin advised him that ASSK and the NLD leadership were amenable to the compromise (terms of which had apparently been floated before). However, as of the morning of May 17, LDR says he has not been contacted further by the regime and does not believe the NLD has received a response to the compromise offer.

[5](#). (C) LDR feels that there is still a very faint glimmer of hope that the regime might see the light. He praised the restraint shown in the Department's and the UNSYG's statements over the weekend regarding the state of the NC process. He feels there are still face-saving ways the regime could accept the compromise offer and allow the NLD to participate, despite missing the NC opening ceremonies today. The regime could claim that the first week, or even two, was

being devoted to administrative and logistical matters, or that the start of monsoon season had delayed the arrival of other delegates, or could manufacture a host of other excuses for allowing the NLD's late entry into the NC.

16. (C) LDR also said that ASSK was frustrated that the regime did not believe her assurances that she would not press too soon for an investigation of the May 30, 2003, Depeyin attack (Note: ASSK told UN Special Rapporteur Pinheiro on his last visit in November 2003 that there was a need for restraint on this matter, see Ref B. End Note). LDR said that ASSK knows there are those in her party that could be considered "hardliners" who want to use May 30 against the regime, but that she can control them and will take full responsibility for the party's actions if she is released.

17. (C) In reference to the cease-fire groups that are participating in the NC, LDR said that he thought the SPDC would have a tough time handling them and keeping them in the process if they stick to their demands for amendment of the SPDC's six political objectives (Ref C). He felt the cease-fire groups' demands were tougher than the three "suggestions" the NLD conveyed to the SPDC in late April (see Ref D).

18. (C) LDR said he had not spoken to SE Razali today, but he felt that the SE still wants to come to Burma soon. LDR said he was wrestling with developing recommendations for what approach the SE should take if another visit is allowed by the regime. COM reminded LDR that she, the Australian, and the U.K. COM's had told LDR that the NLD felt like the international community and the SE were asking the NLD to make all the compromises and hoped that the SE understood that the NLD needed to be reassured that equal pressure was being placed on the SPDC. LDR said he was also aware of the NLD's sentiments and would emphasize this to the SE.

19. (C) The meeting concluded on a down beat note - LDR said that Prime Minister Khin Nyunt is "very weak" and unable to deliver on his long-standing promise of a meeting between ASSK and the "Big Three" - Senior General Than Shwe, General Maung Aye, and the Prime Minister himself. In LDR's view, the current impasse demonstrates that the Senior General has a firm grip on power and little or no intention of entering into a real dialog with the opposition.

10. (C) Comment: Although the recent events are highly discouraging, we agree with LDR's assessment that there could still be a very faint possibility of a compromise that would allow NLD participation in the NC (FYI: COM was told by one of the COM's that attended the opening of the National Convention this morning that Deputy Foreign Minister Win Aung told a small group of COM's at the ceremony that procedurally it would be difficult for the NLD to participate at this late date, but that a political decision to allow their participation could be a possibility. End FYI). On the subject of Razali, if he should be allowed back in by the regime, he will need to come prepared to overcome the NLD's perception that he is asking more than they can continue to give in the way of further compromise with the SPDC. End Comment.
Martinez